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25th April, 1960

COCOM Document No. 3954

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

ON

A UNITED KINGDOM PROPOSAL TO EXPORT BORIC ACID TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA

7th and 25th April, 1960

Present: Belgium (Luxembourg), Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.

Reference: COCOM Document No. 3932.

1. The CHAIRMAN invited Delegations to state their Governments' views on the United Kingdom submission concerning the proposed export to Czechoslovakia of 300 tons of boric acid (COCOM Doc. 3932).
2. The BELGIAN, DANISH and FRENCH Delegates stated that their authorities raised no objection to the export proposed.
3. The UNITED STATES Delegate stated that, in view of the strategic value imputed to this product by his authorities, they were unable to concur in the shipment to this destination of the quantity specified. Their views on this case had much in common with those expressed by the United Kingdom Delegation on the 26th September 1958 (COCOM Doc. 3256, paragraph 4) in connection with an Italian proposal to export 500 tons of boric acid to Czechoslovakia.
4. The ITALIAN Delegate said that he preferred to abstain from expressing views at this juncture. His authorities were still examining this case in the light of previous analagous cases discussed in the Committee. He would of course notify the Secretariat and the interested Delegation as soon as possible.
5. The GERMAN Delegate stated that his authorities considered that the quantity requested seemed to be rather high. Within the past twelve months, the German authorities had declined to consider several applications involving the export of boric acid to Czechoslovakia and to one other destination. The Delegate was authorised, however, to concur in this proposal up to a quantity of 100 tons. He added that, if the Italian case had been submitted at the present time, the views of the German authorities would have been similar to those now given for the United Kingdom proposal.
6. The JAPANESE Delegate said that he had been instructed to maintain the views expressed on the 26th September 1958 (COCOM Doc. 3256, paragraph 2). His authorities might, however, be prepared to review their position if convinced that the situation had changed in the meantime.
7. The NETHERLANDS Delegate said that his authorities had instructed him to raise no objection provided that the United Kingdom authorities were convinced that the order was for civilian requirements. In view of the quantity involved, the Netherlands authorities were somewhat sceptical on this point.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

COCOM Document No. 3954

8. The UNITED KINGDOM Delegate thanked Delegates for the views they had expressed.

9. On the 25th April, the UNITED KINGDOM Delegate stated that the 300 tons of boric acid proposed for Czechoslovakia would have represented about 1,000 to 1,200 tons of glass marbles used for the manufacture of glass fibre. During 1959, the United Kingdom imported from Czechoslovakia between 500 and 600 tons of glass marbles which represented about 150 tons of boric acid. If United Kingdom imports of glass marbles continued on the same level, therefore, it would mean that half of the boric acid sent there would be returning to the United Kingdom alone. It was probable that other countries, perhaps even certain member countries, made similar imports from Czechoslovakia, and that the whole amount might thus return to Western countries in the shape of glass marbles.

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